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Date: 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016

My Ref: T&MReg18

Your Ref:

Dear Mr Bailey

## **Re: Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation**

I refer to the above consultation and wish to make the following representations on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council. My officers look forward to working closely and constructively with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to consider these matters in the future and establish mutually acceptable solutions, through the duty to co-operate, particularly in respect of highways measures and sustainable public transport measures. We also look forward to working jointly with Kent County Council and Highways England given that there are clearly matters that fall within their remit and responsibility.

Whilst it is acknowledged that Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council have a requirement to meet identified needs, it is noted that these Local Plan proposals could have a significant impact on Maidstone Borough residents and businesses. Residents in Maidstone Borough have contacted Maidstone Borough Council to express their grave concerns regarding these proposals.

Should Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council proceed with its proposed development strategy, mitigating transport impacts on already busy routes into Maidstone will be vital, including the A20, Hermitage Lane and the A26, the latter having already been subject to a significant increase in traffic following developments at Kings Hill.

It is noted that there are a number of 'potential developable areas' situated near to the border with Maidstone Borough. In particular the 'South Aylesford and Ditton' area is proposed for significant new residential and employment development. This area already suffers from traffic congestion at both peak times and non-peak times and the proposed developments will potentially make the situation much worse. There are also significant concerns around air quality and the associated impact of new development in this regard.

In their current form, the proposals could also allow settlements to coalesce with Maidstone. Proposals for this part of the borough should therefore include measures to deal with congestion, provision of open space and to address air quality issues.

The measures adopted should consider the location of current and future communities and transport routes, rather than borough boundaries. In particular, the current problems

around Hermitage Lane and the A20 must be addressed and the proposal to investigate a longer term solution to transport challenges in the vicinity, which would necessarily involve Tonbridge and Malling undertaking extra modelling work, is welcomed. Focus in this regard should be upon an alternative transport route that draws road traffic away from this part of the A20 and Hermitage Lane in particular, whilst having regard to mitigating congestion and improving traffic flows on the wider road network in the area. Focus should also be on any potential improvements to sustainable public transport that could address this issue. The retention and provision of substantial open space, including areas of landscaped semi-natural open space as an integral part of any development proposals is crucial to preventing the coalescence of the Maidstone and Malling urban areas, which has been a shared priority for both Planning Authorities for a considerable time. Consideration also needs to be given as a priority to minimising air quality impacts through the use of appropriate landscaping provisions.

We also look forward to providing comments when further details of the Local Plan proposals become known.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Egerton', written in a cursive style.

Mark Egerton  
Planning Policy Manager